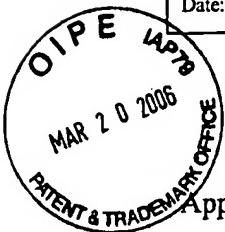


I hereby certify that this correspondence is being facsimile transmitted to the USPTO or deposited with the United States Postal Service with sufficient postage as first class mail in an envelope addressed to "Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450" [37 CFR 1.8(a)] on the date shown below.

Date: March 17, 2006

Signature:

(Laura Shires)



IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Application No.: 10/798,018

Confirmation No.: 8804

Filing Date: March 11, 2004

Inventor(s): Michael D. LAUFER et al.

Title: SURGICAL FASTENING SYSTEM

Examiner: G. Dawson

Group Art Unit: 3731

RESPONSE TO FINAL OFFICE ACTION

Mail Stop AF
Commissioner for Patent
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Sir:

This is in response to the final Office Action mailed February 14, 2006 for which a response is due on May 14, 2006. Applicant is responding within 2 months from the mailing date of the Office Action and request expedited review.

Amendments to the Specification begin on page 2 of this paper.

Amendments to the Drawings begin on page 3 of this paper.

Remarks begin on page 4 of this paper.